

PUBLIC NOTICE

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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FEDERAL-STATE JOINT BOARD ON UNIVERSAL SERVICE SEEKS COMMENT ON RURAL TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATION

PLEADING CYCLE ESTABLISHED

CC Docket No. 96-45

Release Date: October 4, 2000

Comment Date: November 3, 2000

Reply Comment Date: November 30, 2000

In the May 1997 *Universal Service Order*,¹ the Commission, acting on the recommendation of the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service (the Joint Board), encouraged the Joint Board to establish a Rural Task Force to "provide valuable assistance in identifying the issues unique to rural carriers and analyzing the appropriateness of proxy cost models for rural carriers."² On September 17, 1997, the Joint Board announced the creation of the Rural Task Force and directed it to present a report to the Joint Board making specific recommendations on the establishment of a forward-looking economic cost mechanism for rural telephone companies.³ The Joint Board will consider this report in formulating a recommendation to the Commission for universal service reform for rural carriers.

On September 29, 2000, the Rural Task Force submitted the *Rural Task Force Recommendation To The Federal-State Joint Board On Universal Service*. This recommendation, as well as supporting materials, are available on the Joint Board's Web page at http://www.fcc.gov/ccb/universal_service/joint.html and the Rural Task Force's Web site at

¹ *Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service*, CC Docket No. 96-45, Report and Order, 12 FCC Rcd 8776 (1997) (*Universal Service Order*).

² *Universal Service Order* at para. 253.

³ *Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service Announces the Creation of a Rural Task Force; Solicits Nominations for Membership on Rural Task Force*, CC Docket No. 96-45, Public Notice, 12 FCC Rcd 15752 (September 17, 1997). The Joint Board directed the Rural Task Force to submit the report no later than nine months after implementation of the Commission's reform for non-rural carriers which became effective on January 1, 2000. *Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service Announces Rural Task Force Members*, CC Docket No. 96-45, Public Notice, FCC 98J-1 (rel. Sept. 17, 1997).

<http://www.wutc.wa.gov/rtf>.⁴ Consistent with the procedures outlined below, the Joint Board seeks comment on the recommendation.

Pursuant to sections 1.415 and 1.419 of the Commission's rules, 47 C.F.R. §§ 1.415, 1.419, interested parties may file comments on or before **November 3, 2000**, and reply comments on or before **November 30, 2000**. All filings should reference *Federal-State Joint Board On Universal Service*, CC Docket No. 96-45, *Comments on the Rural Task Force Recommendation* and should include the FCC number shown on this Public Notice. Comments may be filed using the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) or by filing paper copies. See *Electronic Filing of Documents in Rulemaking Proceedings*, 63 Fed. Reg. 24,121 (1998). Comments filed through the ECFS can be sent as an electronic file via the Internet to <<http://www.fcc.gov/e-file/ecfs.html>>. Generally, only one copy of an electronic submission must be filed. If multiple docket or rulemaking numbers appear in the caption of this proceeding, however, commenters must transmit one electronic copy of the comments to each docket or rulemaking number referenced in the caption. In completing the transmittal screen, commenters should include their full name, Postal Service mailing address, and the applicable docket or rulemaking number. Parties may also submit electronic comments by Internet e-mail. To receive filing instructions for e-mail comments, commenters should send an e-mail to ecfs@fcc.gov, and should include the following words in the body of the message, "get form <your e-mail address>." A sample form and directions will be sent in reply. Parties who choose to file by paper must file an original and four copies of each filing. If more than one docket or rulemaking number appears in the caption of this proceeding, commenters must submit two additional copies for each additional docket or rulemaking number. All filings must be sent to the Commission's Secretary, Magalie Roman Salas, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, 445 12th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20554.

Parties should also send three paper copies of their filing to Sheryl Todd, Accounting Policy Division, Common Carrier Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, 445 Twelfth Street S.W., Room 5-B540, Washington, D.C. 20554 and to the individuals listed on the attached service list. In addition, commenters must send diskette copies to the Commission's copy contractor, International Transcription Service, Inc., 1231 20th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037.

For further information, contact Gene Fullano, Accounting Policy Division, Common Carrier Bureau at (202) 418-7400, TTY (202) 418-0484.

⁴ Six individual white papers form the evidentiary record considered by the Rural Task Force in formulating the recommendation. The final two white papers will be released by the Rural Task Force on or before October 15, 2000.

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